

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6671

BILL NUMBER: SB 176

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 25, 2008

BILL AMENDED: Jan 24, 2008

SUBJECT: Courthouse Preservation Advisory Commission.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Merritt

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: 2nd Reading - 1st House

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 X DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill establishes the Courthouse Preservation Advisory Commission. It requires the commission to provide assistance for courthouse-related projects. The bill requires the commission to submit a report to the Legislative Council. It also repeals and relocates the definition of "division" for purposes of the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

Effective Date: July 1, 2008.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) The commission consists of 12 members, including 4 state employees. Members are not entitled to per diem. However, subject to the availability of money in the trust fund, a member is entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other expenses incurred in connection with the member's duties.

Upon the request of county officials, the commission must travel to county courthouses to assess potential courthouse rehabilitation projects and provide technical assistance. Among other provisions, the commission may, upon the request of county officials, review and provide recommendations on architectural and/or engineering plans and provide county officials with information concerning funding sources for courthouse preservation projects. The commission must investigate the need for preservation, restoration, and maintenance of historic courthouses as well as study the needs of county officials in planning the restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of courthouses. The Commission must submit a report to the Legislative Council before August 1, 2011. The commission must meet at least four times a year.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must provide administrative support for the commission. Expenses incurred must be paid from a trust fund established by the Auditor of State.

The impact of these provisions will depend on the distance that members must travel in order to attend meetings or visit courthouses, the number of meetings and visitations, and the number and nature of future courthouse rehabilitation projects, as well as whether or not there is money in the trust fund.

Explanation of State Revenues: The bill provides that a trust fund (already established) may be used to implement the provisions of the bill. The commission may accept grants, gifts, and donations for deposit in the fund. Funds received must be used for purposes of the bill. The bill does not provide an appropriation. The amount of revenue that will be generated for the fund is indeterminable. As of 1/22/08, there was around \$18,000 in the existing fund.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: The bill could save money for counties if the use of the commission's expertise results in savings on courthouse preservation projects.

Explanation of Local Revenues: Counties may be eligible to access funds from the fund. The amount of revenue that may become available is indeterminable.

State Agencies Affected: DNR

Local Agencies Affected: Counties.

Information Sources: DNR.

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